

Passenger Trans-Actions

Winter 2000

Michigan Department of Transportation • UPTRAN • Passenger Transportation Division • "We Move People"
"Providing Michigan citizens with the best passenger transportation services through quality customer assistance"

THE FUTURE OF PUBLIC TRANSIT CHALLENGES AND INITIATIVES

Excerpts from a speech given by Phil Kazmierski at the recent Michigan Public Transit Association Legislative Conference.

It is a great time to be involved in public transportation. The strong economy has people on the move to school, shopping, work, doctors, or visiting friends. There is a company locating in Southeast Michigan that is going to be delivering groceries directly to the homes of customers by ordering over the internet. Within ½ hour of their order being placed, the groceries will be delivered thus eliminating the need to travel to the grocery store. As technology advances by leaps and bounds, what type of transit service will be required 10 years from now?

We have an opportunity to shape the future of public transit. To do this, we need to agree on a common vision, goal, and purpose that are understandable (clear) and achievable. What is the transit industry's common goal? Is it a goal that everyone can agree to? Is it an achievable goal? An example of a common goal would be to build a shelter for every bus stop or to make sure that the wait for a bus is no longer than 10 minutes on any route. Once the vision is set, we must develop a strategy to achieve the goal, including how the project will be funded and a mechanism to measure results.

The following statement "Before the year 2015 all people in Michigan will have a public transit choice integrated into an overall transportation system that meets their mobility needs" is the current strategic planning vision. I challenge you to think about this vision and provide us with feedback by completing the strategic planning survey you recently received from the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT). Until we have a common vision, I am not sure we will be able to fully utilize our joint strengths (continued on next page)

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"MDOT - Providing the highest quality transportation services for economic benefit and improved quality of life."

The Future of Public Transit *(continued)*

One of our strengths is partnering. I am proud of the close working relationship that has developed between MDOT, the Family Independence Agency (FIA), and the Department for Career Development (DCD). FIA and DCD are bringing their funds and their needs to the table. In an effort to streamline the process for receiving funds, we have developed a single application for Project Zero that is reviewed by the three departments, as opposed to three separate applications. Both FIA and DCD are willing to give their funds to MDOT for Project Zero and Job Access Funds. MDOT is providing funds to DCD for the Michigan Works Agencies for competitive grants. We recognize that partnerships are being developed at the local level as well. Clearly, these partnerships strengthen public transit's role in these programs.

We also have a big challenge ahead as we continue working together to go after another large Federal Section 5309 capital earmark. For fiscal year 2000, MDOT received the largest earmark of any State Department nationwide. We accomplished this by working together, setting a common goal, and going after that goal.

We are tallying up everyone's needs and it looks like we need more than \$100 million to meet these needs, so we have a big challenge ahead of us. I encourage you to work with us on this common effort.

One of the things I have spoken about in the past is regional service. I believe that we have had some real success and, in some cases, we have had to refine some services, but I continue to believe that regional service is the wave of the future, if transit agencies are going to meet their customers' needs.

Finally, I want to request your assistance with three new initiatives I will be pursuing.

- 1) A transit toolbox for businesses that could include information on existing systems, ridesharing/vanpooling, and voucher programs
- 2) Master Agreement which will contain boilerplate language in a separate multi-year contract
- 3) One time sign-off of Federal Assurances

It is a great time to be involved in public transportation. The future and how we address these and other challenges is in our hands. We, the collective transit community, will do much better if we bring our energies together to achieve a common vision.

Act 51 Transit Committee Update

The committee continues to work on recommendations to present to the State Transportation Commission. The committee is charged with developing recommendations for a regional transportation structure, a new formula operating assistance formula which recognizes the wide variety of transit services provided in Michigan, and a formula which is based on efficiency and effectiveness.

The committee is now focusing on the Formula Operating Assistance Program relative to shifting from a cost based formula to a performance based formula. Two proposals are currently on the table. The two transit associations, the Michigan Public Transit Association (MPTA) and the Michigan Association of Transportation Systems (MASSTrans), have submitted a joint proposal and the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) has submitted a proposal of its own. Both proposals have performance included but in very different ways. The two associations and MDOT have met to identify areas of agreement. Agreement has been reached on some high level key points, such as the need for performance factors in the new formula. The committee is expected to develop its final recommendations by the end of March, 2000.

Check the MDOT website (www.mdot.state.mi.us/act51/index.htm) for meeting minutes and other information. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Kip Grimes at 517/373-0470 or email grimesk@mdot.state.mi.us.

Joel Heilman Retires

Joel Heilman, the Assistant Deputy Director of the Bureau of Urban and Public Transportation (UPTRAN) since 1996, retired January 31. Joel has been with MDOT for 30 years and is a former administrator in the Financial Services Division, an assistant deputy director in the Bureau of Finance and Administration, and an administrator in the Engineering and Scientific Data Center (now Office of Information Management).

In UPTRAN, Joel helped administer and set policy for Michigan's public transportation programs, including more than 150 local public transit agencies, intercity bus transportation, limousines, freight and passenger rail services. His knowledge and experience working within UPTRAN, as well as other areas of MDOT, will be missed.

In recognition of his service to MDOT, the eastbound I-96 Saranac Rest Area will be dedicated in Joel's honor.

Transit Systems Can Help in the 2000 Census

The United States Constitution mandates a census every 10 years to determine how many seats each state will have in the U.S. House of Representatives. But community leaders use the information for everything from planning schools to forecasting future transportation needs to providing recreational opportunities.

The importance of an accurate collection of census data cannot be underestimated. It is expected that **\$50 billion** in federal funds will be distributed over the next 10 years on the basis of population. Most Federal Transit Administration (FTA) funds are distributed using population formulas. The census will serve as the information cornerstone for the next century.

"An estimated 275 million people will be counted in the 2000 census"

"This census is far too important to Michigan and all our citizens for anyone to be left uncounted," said Governor John Engler.

Public transportation funds could feel the impact when census data is collected beginning April 1, 2000 (Census Day). Transit agencies can help by promoting the census in bus terminals, bus advertising and correspondence. For ideas, visit the

Census 2000 web site at www.state.mi.us/census2000.

Governor Engler has appointed representatives from every state agency to a State Agency Complete Count Committee to assure every Michigan citizen is counted. Deryl Holmes, MDOT's Office of Communications, and Richard Nellett, Statewide Model Unit in MDOT's Planning Bureau, have been appointed by Transportation Director Jim DeSana to staff the Complete Count Committee from MDOT.

The State Complete Count Committee appointed by Governor Engler will:

- Help make sure every person in Michigan is counted

- Communicate to Michigan residents the benefits derived from census data
- Encourage state employees to speak accurately and positively about Census 2000 to customers, family, friends and co-workers.

**United States
Census
2000**

There are many ways you can help make the Census 2000 a success. Individuals can start by helping to dispel myths about the census. Explain to your transit riders, co-workers, family and friends that census data is confidential information. Information you provide cannot be shared with IRS, FBI, welfare, immigrations or any other governmental agency. Explain what the pitfalls of an inaccurate count can mean, and how it can impact each and every individual in Michigan.

Visit the Census 2000 Web page, or contact the MDOT Office of Communications at 517-373-2160. Every transit provider in the state can help promote the census by understanding the significance of the census and by getting involved in promoting the collection of census data on April 1, 2000.

Passenger Trans-Actions is a quarterly news bulletin produced by the Michigan Department of Transportation, Passenger Transportation Division for the public transit providers in Michigan. Suggestions or comments may be sent to Jill Adams, MDOT/Passenger Transportation Division, P.O. Box 30050, Lansing, Michigan 48909, phone (517) 373-2051, email adamsji@mdot.state.mi.us. Alternative formats such as large print, braille, or audio-tape are available upon request by calling Rose Ann Ward (517) 335-2598. Number of copies: 500; total cost: \$101.85; cost per copy: \$0.20.

FY 2000 Operating Formula Increased

The FY 2000 Local Bus Operating Assistance program will receive an increase of \$5,400,000 from the unreserved Comprehensive Transportation Fund balance. This will bring the program to \$149,976,300. Urban agencies greater than 100,000 population will now receive 39.76 percent of their eligible operating costs and urban agencies less than 100,000 population and nonurban agencies will receive 47.54 percent.

Michigan Transit Strategic Plan Update

The Michigan Transit Strategic Plan surveys have been distributed to transportation providers, advisory team members, MDOT staff, and stakeholders. The results from the survey will be used to develop the goals and objectives for the revised transit strategic plan. The goal is 100 percent participation from survey respondents. For additional information regarding this project, please contact Linda Tuttle at 517/373-7645 or tuttletl@mdot.state.mi.us.

PTD Annual Meeting

Mark your calendars for the 2000 PTD Annual Meeting to be held October 16-18 at the Valley Plaza Resort in Midland, Michigan.

The annual meeting team is beginning to plan for this year's event. If you have any suggestions or topics that you would like to have included on the agenda, contact Linda Tuttle at 517/373-7645 or tuttletl@mdot.state.mi.us

2000 Team Members: Linda Tuttle, Team Leader; Jean Ruestman; Kathy Urda; Tom Jackson; Norma Guevara; Angie Payne; Dave Sucha; Connie Benca; Jill Adams; Gus Llubes; Karen Stotts; Suzie Dillon; Lynn Lafler- Ionia; Cherie Giller-Saugatuck; Vicki Higgins-Big Rapids; and Marcia Bohannon-Lenawee. We are looking for an urban agency representative to participate on the team. Please contact Linda Tuttle if you are interested.

Metrotrans Corporation Files Chapter 11 Bankruptcy

PTD received information that in December 1999, Metrotrans Corporation filed Chapter 11 bankruptcy in the United States Bankruptcy Court for the Northern District of Georgia, Newnan Division. Inquiries should be directed to Linda McLane at Lamberth, Bonapfel, Cifelli & Stokes, PA (404/262-7373).

DATES TO REMEMBER

APTA Legislative Conference

March 12-15, 2000
Washington, DC

APTA Bus & Paratransit Conference

May 7-11, 2000
Houston, Texas

CTAA Expo 2000

June 3-9, 2000
Ft. Lauderdale, FL

PTD Transit Vehicle & Equipment Seminar

June 14-16, 2000
Ralph A. MacMullan Center
Higgins Lake, Michigan

PTD Michigan Small Bus Rodeo

July 19, 2000
Holiday Inn South, Lansing
Lugnuts Outing - July 18

TRB Conference on Transportation and Environment for the 21st Century

July 23-26, 2000
Pittsburgh, PA

MPTA Annual Meeting

August 16-18, 2000
Harbor Springs, MI

APTA Annual Meeting

September 24-28
San Francisco, CA

PTD Annual Meeting

October 16-18, 2000
Valley Plaza Resort, Midland



How Accurate Is Your PTMS Data?

The Passenger Transportation Division (PTD) is seeking Transit Agencies (TAs) assistance to verify data accuracy and reporting consistency of the annual Reconciled Operating Assistance Reports (OARs) on the Public Transportation Management System (PTMS). The PTMS database is THE source of all financial and non-financial data for Michigan transit agencies. Among its purposes, PTMS data is used in the calculation of state formula, which translates into funding for TAs. PTMS data is directly available to TAs and is also available to the public, so it can potentially be distributed globally.

The PTD wants to ensure that all of the PTMS data is as accurate as possible. To that end, two projects are underway that may result in data verification questions being asked of the TAs. First, the 1999 Reconciled OARs are being reviewed by the TA's Project Manager, and then reviewed again by the PTD's accountant. The second project is an overall review to identify potential reporting inconsistencies by each TA in its 1998 Reconciled OAR as it appears on PTMS. Both projects are extensive and may result in a data entry or reporting change to existing data on PTMS.

Please help us in these projects by taking the initiative to contact your Project Manager to discuss any questions or concerns that you may have regarding the PTMS data. Your assistance is the key to achieving a statewide public transit database of the highest integrity and is greatly appreciated!

Do you have a reporting format question? Please see MDOT's Local Public Transit Revenue and Expense Manual dated October 1, 1997, or contact your Project Manager for more detailed information.

Transit Vehicle & Equipment Seminar

Mark your calendars for June 14-16, 2000, for the 23rd Annual Transit Vehicle & Equipment Seminar at the DNR Ralph A. MacMullan Conference Center on Higgins Lake. This year's seminar will include a vehicle and equipment show on June 14, and a Braun lift certification class. Registration packets will be mailed in April. If you require additional information, please contact Jill Adams at 517/373-2051 or email adamsji@mdot.state.mi.us.

Motor Bus and Limousine Registrations

PTD's Regulatory Unit administers both the limousine and motor bus regulatory programs under the Limousine Transportation Act (Public Act 271 of 1990) and Motor Bus Transportation Act (Act 432 of 1982). Renewal certificates are issued annually if limousine and motorbus operators meet statutory requirements.

Credentialing activities this past December and January included the mailing of FY 2000 registrations to 440 limousine companies and 184 motor bus carriers. Thumbs Up!--- to Dave Sucha and his staff for doing such a fine job in helping the department meet our legislative responsibilities.

Welcome New PTD Employees

The Financial Management Unit (FMU) of the Program Administration Section welcomes two new employees.

Replacing Amy Banninga, who left for a promotion in Treasury, is Barbara O'Meara. Barbara was an auditor in MDOT's Office of Commission Audits and her CPA knowledge and experience in auditing UPTRAN contracts make her a valuable addition to the FMU staff. Among Barbara's duties are the distribution of some \$150 million a year in formula transit operating assistance, the close out of 400-500 contracts a year, and the disposal of state owned buses. You may contact Barbara at 517/241-3894 or omearab@mdot.state.mi.us. Welcome, Barbara.

Also joining FMU is Lisa Parks who previously worked in the Michigan Department of Corrections. Lisa's duties include: preparing requisitions and purchase orders for private sector sourcing, reviewing project managers' requests for grant payments to transit agencies, assisting in setting up grant contracts and purchase orders, and acting as PTD's liaison with the Department of Management and Budget's Office of Purchasing to develop invitations to bid. You may contact Lisa at 517/241-1893 or parkslla@mdot.state.mi.us. Welcome aboard, Lisa.



FY 2000 Federal Program Update

Federal Section 5309 (Capital Discretionary Program). Each year Congress earmarks Federal Section 5309 capital funds to transit agencies and state departments of transportation around the country. In anticipation of the FY 2000 Congressional earmark, MDOT worked with transit agencies to develop a request for \$30,512,400 of federal funds. This request consisted of two parts: Part one was for \$13,400,000 which was authorized to Michigan in the original TEA-21 legislation, and Part two was for \$17,112,400 for additional projects over and above the \$13,400,000. MDOT received a Congressional earmark from Section 5309 (discretionary) funds of \$22,074,625. This was the largest single line item earmark of Section 5309 funds for any one state transportation department in FY 2000.

Since the actual earmark was \$8,437,775 less than the requested amount, MDOT needed to reduce the original request to bring it in line with the actual earmark. We are keeping the \$13,400,000 as we originally proposed since it was authorized in the original TEA-21 legislation. We are reducing the original request of \$17,112,400 to \$8,674,276. This reflects 50.69 percent of the original amount requested for each project. This will bring all nonurban agencies to below 14 percent of their fleet being eligible for replacement. We are working on the application now and plan to submit it to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) in March. For FY 2001, MDOT and the transit association are working together to develop discretionary capital requests to be submitted to the Congressional Delegation in March, 2000.

Federal Section 5311 (Nonurban Formula Program). We will utilize a portion of the Federal Section 5311 funds for bus replacement, but we will continue the 10.95 percent operating assistance reimbursement rate for FY 2000. The capital funds will provide 14 additional replacement buses for the nonurban agencies. This will bring all nonurban agencies to below 11.5 percent of their fleet being eligible for replacement. We plan to submit the Section 5311 Capital Assistance application in March and this application will include these replacement buses and projects approved for STP funds in the Small Urban Program and at the Rural Task Force meetings.

The Section 5311 Operating Assistance grant was approved on February 15th for \$5.3 million. Contracts between MDOT and the transit agencies have been mailed and payments will begin when the contracts are returned to MDOT and executed.

Federal Section 5307 (Urban Formula Program). We will utilize a portion of the FY 2000 5307 funds apportioned to the Governor for replacement buses, but the funds allocated directly to the small/urban agencies will increase 8.78% over the funds allocated last year. Allocation of the funds for bus replacement will be done in the next month and we plan to submit the application to the FTA in March. We will keep the small/medium urban agencies updated on this distribution.

Federal Section 5310 (Private Nonprofit Elderly and Disabled Program). We will submit an application for Federal 5310 funds. The transit agencies whose capital needs have been funded through this program will be notified within the next month of the number of buses to be included for each agency.

If you have any questions regarding funding, please contact your project manager.

State Vehicle Contract Status

The current medium-duty contract with Hoekstra Truck Equipment Company, Inc for ElDorado National buses will expire on March 31, 2000. Please check all of your executed state/local capital contracts and make sure that you have placed all orders for this size vehicle by the above expiration date.

Also, the standard cutaway pilot bus has been approved. ElDorado National is ready to begin regular production of buses. If you have a cutaway bus on order, please check with Jeff Kreiser (616-241-6664) at Hoekstra Truck Equipment Company, Inc. for an estimated delivery date. This contract will expire on September 1, 2001.



Around the State

New Director at Sanilac Transportation

There's a new member in the Michigan public transit arena. Onalee Pallas is the new Executive Director of Sanilac Transportation Corporation, a position previously held by Marj Zachweija who is now with the Sanilac County Public Health Department. Ms. Pallas has experience in the transportation department of the local school district and comes to public transit with solid operations experience.

Best wishes to Marj, and . . . Welcome, Onalee to Michigan's public transit community. We look forward to working with you.

"History Walk" for Bay Metro

Bay Metro Transportation Authority has a place on the Bay County Historical Society's "History Walk" thanks to the daughter of one of their regular riders. The daughter purchased a brick in the walk in the name of Bay Metro "in appreciation for the service and kindness of the staff and drivers at Bay Metro to their customers."

The History Walkway will go along the front gardens of the Historical Museum of Bay County. Congratulations, Bay Metro.

Millage Updates

Branch Area Transit Authority (BATA) – Special congratulations to Dawn Mason and the fine staff at BATA. At a special millage election on January 18, Branch County residents renewed their transit millage with 966 yes votes to 221 no, or a resounding 81%! The high approval rate is clearly indicative of the excellent service BATA continues to provide to Branch County residents and the hard work of all BATA employees. Congratulations to everyone and keep up the fine work!!

Capital Area Transportation Authority (CATA) – Local voters renewed CATA's 1.4 mill property tax by a more than 70% margin on November 2, 1999. This renewal shows the tremendous support of public transportation in the Lansing area and the dedication of the CATA staff to provide quality service to their customers. Congratulations!

GRATA's Downtown Express Service



In January this year, the Grand Rapids Transit Authority (GRATA) in partnership with MDOT began a new commuter service, the Downtown Express. The new commuter service is designed to help ease congestion problems caused by the S-curve reconstruction on US-131 in Grand Rapids.

The Downtown Express service consists of three park and ride lots in the Grand Rapids area. Commuters park in these lots and board buses for a direct trip to downtown (no interim stops). From the south lots, the downtown trip takes approximately 20 minutes using Michigan's first high occupancy vehicle (HOV) lane which is open only to Express buses and carpools with two or more passengers. In the first two weeks after the S-curve closure, over 6,000 rides were logged on the Express service and riders cited the convenience as the primary reason for using the service.

The S-curve reconstruction is the largest and most complex civil engineering project MDOT has ever launched in West Michigan and will take 18 months and \$145 million to complete. The S-curve reconstruction will also include the addition of the latest anti-icing technology available today. You can check out the latest information on the US-131 S-Curve Reconstruction at www.US-131detour.com.

Hear Ye! Hear Ye! Articles Wanted

Do you have news from your transit agency that you would like to share? The *Passenger Trans-Actions* would love to broadcast your news around the state. Also, don't forget the MDOT "Heart of Gold Award" to honor transit employees going above and beyond the call of duty.

You can submit articles at any time and we will strive to print the articles in the next edition of the newsletter. Send articles to: Jill Adams, Michigan Department of Transportation, UPTRAN/Passenger Transportation Division, P. O. Box 30050, Lansing, MI 48909, or email articles to adamsji@mdot.state.mi.us.

Michigan Department of Transportation

James R. DeSana, Director

Urban and Public Transportation

Philip F. Kazmierski, Deputy Director

Passenger Transportation Division

Kip Grimes, Administrator

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Around the State (continued)

Flint, Mich., Transportation Employees Help Evacuate Senior Citizens' Home



When a gas explosion forced residents of a senior citizen complex in Flint from their homes on Nov. 10, employees of the Mass Transportation Authority were an integral part of the response force.

MTA driver Cleveland Simon was driving his in-bound route to downtown Flint around 9 p.m. that day when a police officer flagged him down and requested his help. A gas explosion had ripped through the convalescent home at Clara Barton Terrace, a local senior citizen complex, and many patients needed immediate shelter from the freezing rain outside. The convalescent facility housed 94 residents and 16 employees.

When Simon arrived on the scene, he contacted dispatcher Trula Parent to send more buses. Parent, an MTA employee since 1973 and a former bus driver herself, immediately sent four maintenance employees with buses to the scene; six additional buses were dispatched later.

"I can't say enough about being prepared. Our team of employees went beyond the call of duty."

As news of the severity of the explosion spread, off-duty MTA employees arrived at dispatch, volunteering their services in the crisis. Many MTA vehicles were so prompt in responding to the call that they arrived on the scene before emergency vehicles.

The buses at the scene quickly became shelters, housing residents away from the weather until they could be moved to other locations. MTA buses transported some 23 residents to local hospitals for treatment, and a 20-member team of MTA employees used 10 buses to evacuate elderly residents to churches, convalescent homes, and hospitals. The last 22 residents arrived at a convalescent home outside the county at 1 a.m.

According to later reports, three residents and two employees lost their lives in the explosion.

The MTA credited its preparedness to the emergency preparedness drills in which it has cooperated with the Civil Defense Department since the mid-1980s.

"I can't say enough about being prepared," said Edgar H. Benning, MTA director of community relations and a member of the preparedness drill team. "Our team of employees went beyond the call of duty."

In a letter of appreciation to the system, Flint Fire Chief Theron Wiggins acknowledged the help and support provided by MTA employees during the incident. He said MTA employees "came together to provide care and a sense of hope during a doubtful moment."

Reprinted with permission from the December 13, 1999, issue of the American Public Transportation Association's newspaper, Passenger Transport.

John R. Steiding

John passed away on February 20, 2000 at the age of 54. John courageously battled liver and colon cancer for the past two years. He is well known in the Michigan transit community, primarily for his work in transit and for his service as transportation coordinator to the Cass County Transportation Authority. John worked in this capacity for 12 years and was instrumental in getting the Authority organized to begin service in 1988. He will be greatly missed by his wife Katheryn, sons John Jr. and wife Theresa, Scott and fiancée, Marci and the apple of his eye, granddaughter Delaney. John was a real asset to the Michigan transit community and he will be missed by all who knew him.

Macatawa Area Express

The Holland-Zeeland Area officially celebrated the expansion of its transit system January 14th. The expansion results in approximately a doubling of the service area and population served, a new name and look for the system, and the introduction of three fixed routes to complement the demand response service.

The *Macatawa Area Express* (MAX) is the product of a cooperative effort of the City of Holland, City of Zeeland, and Holland Charter Township. The new system is projected to provide approximately 257,000 trips in its first year of operation.

As was the case with the former Holland Dial-a-Ride, the system is still owned by the City of Holland which contracts with a private company, ATCVancom, to handle daily operations. The other units of government have signed agreements with the City of Holland to purchase service. Funding for the system is being provided by FTA, MDOT and the participating units of government through a dedicated millage or their general fund.



Another expansion of the system is anticipated for 2002 at which time the development of a transit authority supported by an areawide millage will be pursued. Special thanks to Connie Benca, PTD project manager, for coordinating the many activities connected with this expanded state/local partnership.

Staying UP late

Not much happens at 2 a.m. in most places. Businesses have been closed for hours, people are tucked under their covers fast asleep, and darkness has taken over the sky.

Yet, in Escanaba, Mich., a rural town in Michigan's Upper Peninsula (UP), a small intermodal station is hopping with passengers arriving from all directions. Ray Leach, the Escanaba agent, not only works the regular daytime shift, but returns each morning at 12:30 to greet the buses. According to Leach, his friends think he's nuts, but he believes it's all worth it.



"This is a service that people up here need," said Leach. "It's a real lifeline, connecting people who otherwise might not have a way to get together."

A typical day for Leach begins at 9 a.m. He works at the intermodal until 6 or 7 p.m., returns for an hour at 8:30, then returns again to work from 12:30 a.m. until 2:30. Leach's 22 years in the Navy and his feelings about Greyhound have helped him survive this rigorous schedule. He's recently hired a full-time night employee to give himself a break.

"I rode Greyhound years ago when I would come home from military leave," said Leach. "People here have ridden it most of their lives. It really means something in the UP."

The 2 a.m. stop doesn't seem to bother passengers. They come prepared. In addition, it allows them to arrive in major cities, such as Chicago or Duluth, Minn., during the day so they can easily make their connections with little layover. "Frequent UP travelers always have a survival kit with them," Leach commented. "This could be a couple of candy bars, an apple, or other things to get them through the night."

A typical bus load in the UP is quite different than that of most locations. Passengers include college kids, moms going to see their daughters, senior citizens who have never traveled by anything but Greyhound and professionals visiting the UP for business purposes. Although the agency has only been open since May, Leach already has several "regulars." The isolation of the UP and the harsh winters make Greyhound the perfect transportation choice.

To make this morning stop more comfortable for passengers, Leach is continually upgrading his facility. He provides coffee and hot chocolate, plans to add a microwave and wants to offer more microwaveable foods in the vending machine.

Greyhound's return service to the UP isn't just another addition to the schedule books. It really means something to these passengers, including Leach. The 2 a.m. departures may seem like an inconvenience to most, but for the UP passengers, it's their lifeline.

Reprinted with permission from the December 1999 edition of Greyhound Today. Ray Leach is the manager of the Delta Area Transit Authority.

SATA Begins Service

Shiawassee Area Transportation Agency (SATA) began providing local public transportation services in Shiawassee County on February 1, 2000. The hours of operation are from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Friday.

The Perry/Morrice, Durand/Vernon, and Owosso/Corunna areas will receive demand response service, with a connection between the communities using deviated routes and in conjunction with the private carrier Indian Trails. The remainder of the county will receive service on a contractual basis.

The transit service is a culmination of discussions and meetings held by the Shiawassee County Coordination Committee with human service agencies, local government, schools and business, and the completion of the Shiawassee County Transportation Study in February 1998. Based upon the results of the study, the equipment and/or facilities of several agencies ranging from local governments and private non-profits to school districts and private for profit have been consolidated to provide transit service.

Some of the agencies participating in this effort are: Council on Aging, Association of Retarded Citizens, Memorial Hospital, Regional Education Service District, City of Owosso, Perry school district and Indian Trails.

In addition to the consolidation effort, SATA was successful in applying to the State for operating assistance and to the local Rural Task Force for funds to purchase communication system. SATA was also a part of the initial Work First program and used the funds to purchase a van to deliver services connected with employment.

In the near future, SATA hopes to be providing after hours and weekend service, primarily for employment for Project Zero. In addition, SATA will continue its effort to coordinate and consolidate services to the residents of Shiawassee County by partnering with Indian Trails to provide regional service to Flint and Lansing.

Thanks to Tom Jackson, PTD project manager, for spending many hours in Shiawassee County to bring this new transit system to fruition.

ADA UPDATE

Access Board Issues Proposed Rulemaking to Update the ADAAG

The Federal Access Board issued a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking in a Federal Register dated November 16, 1999, to update the Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG). When finalized, the ADAAG would be reorganized to make it consistent with the accessibility standards of the Architectural Barriers Act (ABA).

The proposed rule includes a new section on residential facilities and newly recommended standards for work areas, alarms, teletypewriters (TTYs), signage, elevators, automatic teller machines and public transit facilities. The proposed rule also recommends a number of changed requirements for rail stations.

Comments on the proposed rule, which can be viewed at <http://www.access-board.gov>, should be sent to the Office of Technical and Information Services, Access Board, 1331 F St. NW, Suite 1000, Washington, DC 20004. E-mail comments should be sent to docket@access-board.gov. Comments should be received by March 15, 2000.

FTA Announces Availability of Funds for the OTRB Accessibility Program

In a Federal Register dated January 18, 2000, the U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Transit Administration (FTA) announced the availability of funds in Fiscal Year 2000 for the Over-the-Road Bus (OTRB) Accessibility Program, Section 3038 of the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21).

Intercity carriers operating fixed route service or charter/tour bus service are eligible applicants for this program. The guaranteed funding in FY 2000 is \$2 million nationally for intercity fixed route service and \$1.7 million for OTRB service including charter and tour.

The projects funded under this program will help make OTRBs accessible and provide training to drivers regarding the use of accessibility features and assisting passengers with disabilities. Applications are due to appropriate FTA regional offices by the close of the business day on April 28, 2000. FTA expects to notify those selected for funding in July, 2000.